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ABSTRACT

The final report of a study on the impact of English language training on adult Southeast Asian refugees in the United States summarizes the findings of the study's three phases, which include (1) a mail survey of local, regional, and state program administrators; (2) 22 program site visits and four community surveys; and (3) a six-month longitudinal study of refugees' English acquisition patterns. The report's introductory chapter outlines the study's background and methodology. The second chapter presents findings concerning program availability and participation (range of programs and services, costs and resources, individual refugee characteristics and previous language training, refugee employment, program exit, and barriers to participation). The third chapter discusses refugees' English language acquisition (effects of background characteristics, affective factors, program impact, and the relationship of work). Chapter four looks at the characteristics of English language instruction for refugees (teacher staff training and effectiveness, organization of instruction, and classroom instructional approaches and content). A final chapter presents the study's conclusions, and policy and program recommendations for federal and state resettlement administration, local program planning, curriculum and assessment materials development, and instruction. (MSE)

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ED258476

A STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR REFUGEES

PUBLIC REPORT

Stephen Reder
Mary Cohn
Judith Arter
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April 1984

Prepared for:

Office of Refugee Resettlement
United States Department of Health and Human Services

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PREFACE

A series of reports has been prepared to describe the methods, findings and recommendations of this Study. A technical report for each of the three phases of the Study--Phase I: Mail Survey of Service Providers; Phase II: Program Site Visits and Community Surveys; Phase III: Longitudinal Study of English Acquisition--as well as this final summary report (the Public Report) are available through the Educational Resource and Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) and through the Refugee Materials Center, U.S. Department of Education, Region VII, 324 Eleventh Street, Ninth Floor, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

This Study was carried out as a team effort by the Literacy and Language Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Key staff included:

Stephen Reder, Project Director

Lead role in the overall design of the Study, in developing the methodology for Phase II, the methodology for Phase III and analysis of Community Survey data. Assisted with program visits and analysis of classroom observation and Longitudinal Study data.

Mary Cohn, Phase II Coordinator

Lead role in planning, conducting, analyzing and writing up the program visits and classroom observations. Assisted with interpretation of Phase I and III data.

Judith Arter, Phase III Coordinator

Lead role in planning, conducting, analyzing and writing up the Phase III Longitudinal Study and analyzing the Phase I data. Assisted with Phase II program visits.

Steven Nelson, Phase I Coordinator

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Randy Nelson

Conducted data analysis of the Phase II classroom observation data.

William Hadley

Assisted with conducting the Phase III Longitudinal Study and with the write-up of Phase I.

Rosalind Hamar, Lucinda Wong and Karen Green

Assisted with program visits in Phase II.

Susie Barfield

Responsible for support services and material production as well as assisting with project management.

The staff would like to acknowledge the many individuals and programs whose cooperation and assistance were invaluable to the Study. First are several groups which are so large that we cannot name all of their members:

- the hundreds of program administrators who took precious hours away from already pressing schedules to complete the mail survey questionnaires;
- the four hundred families who allowed us to come into their homes to complete the community surveys in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Denver, Stockton, and Seattle areas;
- the teachers and students in the 120 classrooms who allowed us to come in and observe their classes on several occasions;
- the numerous refugees who participated in the standardized testing during the Longitudinal Study in Portland, Denver, San Diego and Oklahoma City;
- the many part-time bilingual staff who assisted us in conducting the program visits and community surveys in Seattle, Stockton, San Diego, Denver, New Orleans, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Oklahoma City and Arlington County, Virginia.

In addition to these many important but unnamed individuals, a number of individuals and organizations who played an important role in this Study must be added. They are:

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Sister Ann Wisda & Margaret Barnett
Catholic Social Ministries, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Kathleen Lowry
International Rescue Committee, Portland, Oregon

Father John Nghi & Father Vincent Minh
Southeast Asian Vicariate, Portland, Oregon

And finally, Allan Gall of the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, who provided continual advice, support and encouragement to staff throughout the Study.

To all of those who helped the Study, thank you very much. Despite all of this help, errors were no doubt made. If so, they are the responsibility of the authors alone.

We hope that future refugees who come to the United States will somehow benefit from these efforts as they go about learning English.

I

INTRODUCTION

Background

In recent years, refugee resettlement policy has considered English proficiency to be a crucially important component of effective refugee resettlement. Resettlement agencies and refugees alike also identify lack of English as a major barrier to successful resettlement. The need for refugees arriving in the U.S. to use English is pervasive and immediate, reaching into every aspect of resettlement from social adjustment to employment. Problems in learning English have become a metaphor for the myriad difficulties refugees face in the United States, so much so that refugees commonly say that the largest obstacle they face in the United States is "English." As an older refugee put it, "Other people, English speakers, see the whole world. I only see half of it. I am like a blind man learning to see."

The purpose of this project has been to investigate the language learning experience of recently arrived Southeast Asian adult refugees, particularly those with little previous education or exposure to Western culture, and to determine the factors which contribute most to their successful English acquisition. Although the project has focused primarily on the effectiveness of English language training programs funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the study also looked at the context of language acquisition, considering the pre-entry and current resettlement experiences of refugees. Because refugees bring a wide range of life and language experiences with them to the classroom, a broader language acquisition context provides a more meaningful perspective from which to view the extent, nature, and effectiveness of English language training programs throughout the country.

Between 1975 and the end of 1981, over half a million Southeast Asian refugees had entered the United States in the aftermath of the Vietnamese war; a large proportion of these refugees have subsequently participated in English language training programs. Over 300 English language training programs for refugees were funded by ORR in FY 1981 and 1982. These programs were located in all but one state of the nation. The rapid influx of Southeast Asian refugees during these years has meant that existing English training programs have had to adapt quickly to the increased demands of numerous new students, and in some cases, programs were created especially for Southeast Asian refugees. Many refugees who arrived in 1979 and 1980 had little previous education, literacy skills, or exposure to Western society; these refugees presented new challenges to English programs previously geared toward training the more educated, urbanized refugee and immigrant student.

Changes continue to take place in the numbers and types of new students entering programs. For example, more students than in previous years participate in English language training in camps before they enter the United States. There are fewer new arrivals now than before. The present study is ORR's first attempt to obtain a comprehensive picture of the English language training programs supported under the refugee resettlement program. Although this report presents only a snapshot in time of English language training for refugees, particularly for those with little educational background, it is hoped that the results of the project will clarify some on-going issues in English language training for adult refugees and migrant groups, and inform future policy regarding English training for refugees.

Project Methodology

The Study of Refugee English Language Training (SRELT) project was conducted in three distinct parts or phases. Several approaches were used in the various phases to provide both a comprehensive overview of refugee English language training throughout the nation and more in-depth information on the context of refugee English language training acquisition. The varied types of data collected in the phases offer diverse but generally converging perspectives on the complex issues of refugee English acquisition.

In Phase I, a mail survey gathered comprehensive program, state and regional data on the administration, extent, cost and outcomes of refugee English language training. In Phase II, on-site program and classroom visits provided detailed information on the workings of a sample of programs, as well as perspectives on English language training from students, teachers and administrators. Phase II household surveys collected self-report data on individual refugees' English language acquisition, program participation and demographic characteristics. In Phase III, a longitudinal study was conducted. A standardized testing instrument was used to measure English language proficiency gains of a selected cohort of recently-arrived refugees over a six-month period.

The Study of Refugee English Language Training project was conducted over a period from October 1981 to June 1983. The methodology is summarized below in short descriptions of each of the phases of the project.

Phase I: Mail Survey of Service Providers

Phase I conducted a comprehensive mail survey of local ORR-funded English language training service providers. The purpose of the survey was to gather descriptive and qualitative information regarding the extent, nature and cost

of ORR-funded English language training programs across the nation and to identify factors perceived to be related to successful English language training. Since this phase of the study was concerned with the extent of services in the nation, a census rather than a sample approach was used. Two hundred thirty-two or 71% of the 327 local service providers funded by ORR returned survey questionnaires. The overall return rate for the fifteen states having the largest refugee populations was 70%, reflecting a relatively substantial representation for these sites; findings from the survey can be considered quite representative of refugee English language training programs.

Phase II: Program Site Visits and Community Surveys

Phase II consisted of two major components: intensive on-site visits of 22 selected programs in eight metropolitan areas, and in-home surveys of approximately 400 refugee households in four of the cities in which programs were visited. The purpose of the site visits, conducted in the Spring of 1982, was to learn about the nature and quality of English language training currently available to newly arriving Southeast Asian refugees. These on-site observations were designed to review a sample of English training programs representing different resettlement contexts and a range of institutional types and approaches to teaching English.

Program site visits. Project staff visited programs in Northern Virginia/Washington DC, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Denver, San Diego, Stockton and Seattle. These areas were chosen to represent a wide range of resettlement contexts, including varying degrees of refugee impact on the area, employment rates, public assistance policies and types of programs available.

The program visits consisted of extensive classroom observations and discussions with administrators, teachers, and students from each program. Staff talked to 32 administrators, over 100 teachers, and over 400 students, gathering their views on effective English language training for refugees, reasons for participation and non-participation, and strategies for learning and teaching English.

The classroom observations, however, were the main focus of the site visits. Since the primary target of the SRELT project was recently arrived Southeast Asian refugees, in particular those with little educational background, we visited the two lowest levels of the program, and the second to highest level. Vocational programs and academic programs are therefore purposely underrepresented in this phase. In most programs, two separate sections for each level were observed, making a total of six classes per program. Each class was observed for one hour on three separate days, using a highly structured observation instrument which recorded in detail teacher approaches and techniques and student response.

Community surveys. In designing the overall SRELT study, it became clear that assessing the impact of English language training requires information about both program participants and non-participants; controlled comparisons of the English proficiency of English language training recipients and non-recipients were needed to assess the impact of programs. Surveys of Southeast Asian households were therefore conducted in four of the eight cities in which English language training (ELT) programs were visited: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Denver, Stockton and Seattle. These surveys were designed to:

(1) provide background demographic information about the refugee communities being served by English language training programs;

(2) gather information about English language training service utilization in these communities; and

(3) measure development of refugees' English language proficiency.

Resource constraints necessitated a small, relatively simple survey; no more than about 400 households could be surveyed, approximately 100 in each city. Because of this limited sample size, all Southeast Asian refugee groups could not be included. Three groups of refugees were therefore selected: Vietnamese nationals (including both ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese), Cambodians and Hmong (from Laos). The population was sampled from these groups among households which had resided in the given city at least one year and had been in the United States less than three years. These residence requirements were imposed to focus the survey on adults most likely to have been served by current English language training programs for refugees.

Phase III: Longitudinal Study of English Acquisition

The purpose of this phase of the project was to measure the differences in language acquisition by Southeast Asian refugees under different resettlement contexts; results were analyzed to illuminate how individual background characteristics, work experience and participation in English language training in the United States combine to foster acquisition of English.

Phase III was designed to investigate the relative efficiency of English language training and employment in promoting English skills for new arrivals. Conducted between October 1982 and May 1983, Phase III was a longitudinal study of a total of 400 refugees in four cities: Portland, Oregon; San Diego; Denver; and Oklahoma City. Study participants were chosen through local voluntary agencies (Volags) and were all recent arrivals, having been placed by the Volags in the United States between January and March 1982

or between June and August 1982. Participants were given the Basic English Skills Test (B.E.S.T.), a language proficiency test designed by the Center for Applied Linguistics especially for use with adult refugee language learners. Six months after the first test was administered, participants were called back to take a post-test, again the B.E.S.T. For each participant, information on prior educational and language experiences as well as resettlement experiences was collected, including information related to the major variables being examined: English language participation and employment. Of the original 400 tested, 308 individuals returned for the post-test.

Organization of Report

The SRELT Public Report which follows synthesizes the most important findings of the three phases of the project outlined above. The report is organized by issue or topic rather than by study phase. Wherever possible, the data on which conclusions are based are referenced so that interested readers may refer to these documents for further details.

Chapter II discusses program availability and student participation. It focuses first on the range and extent of services available for refugees, the types of programs and the costs and resources of program operation. The second part of this chapter explores the refugee participation in English language training, briefly presenting data on English training refugees have had in their native countries and in refugee camps, then looking in greater depth at participation in refugee English language training programs in the United States. This chapter, as well as the following chapter, should be of particular interest to those involved in refugee resettlement policy planning,

as well as those directly involved in English language training program planning.

Chapter III presents project findings relating to refugee English language acquisition. In the first part of this chapter, we look at the overall adult refugee language acquisition, with particular attention to the background and resettlement context factors which are related to acquiring English. In the second part of the chapter, the impact of refugee English language training on English acquisition is discussed and compared with the apparent effect of employment on acquisition.

Chapter IV focuses on instruction, first describing the instructional features of programs which participated in the Study of Refugee English Language Training, then discussing some aspects of effective English language training for refugees. Both program administrators and refugee English language teachers should be interested in this section of the report.

The final chapter of this report summarizes the major conclusions of the project, discussing implications and making recommendations for resettlement policy at the federal and local level, for program planning and for instructors.

II

PROGRAM AVAILABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Range of Programs and Services

An initial task of the project was to compile a comprehensive list of ORR-funded providers of English language training to adult refugees. Based on the information provided to us by State Refugee Coordinators, there were 327 service providers receiving ORR funds who offered English language training to adult refugees during FY 1981 or FY 1982. This study focuses primarily on these ORR-funded programs, which make up the majority of programs providing English language training to adult refugees. There are, of course, many other public and private efforts ranging from large community colleges to local volunteer programs which also provide English language training to refugees.

Extrapolating enrollment figures from Phase I Survey respondents, we estimate that 149,890 refugees were enrolled in ORR-funded English language training during FY 1982; during that same year 97,355 refugees entered the U.S. Local programs enrolled a median of 190 refugees in FY 1981 and 177 refugees in FY 1982. This slight drop in enrollment is not reflected in a comparison of median attendance reported in the Phase I Mail Survey; attendance remained relatively stable over the two years.

The survey of local service providers indicates that institutions which offer English language training vary widely in type and size. About one-half of the programs are part of secondary school adult education programs or community colleges; the remainder are housed within many different types of public and private non-profit organizations. About two-thirds of the organizations providing English language training to adult refugees had provided ELT to other groups before the arrival of large numbers of refugees.

Table II-1 shows other major services provided to refugees in ORR-funded ELT programs. Programs have proved quite flexible in meeting the language training demands of large numbers of refugees. In fact, most programs provide a range of support services to adult refugees in addition to language training. Table II-1 illustrates the breadth of multi-service provision. For example, 40.2% of the ELT programs also provide transportation, 68.3% provide career counseling, etc.

Table II-1

OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED BY PROGRAMS OFFERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING IN FY 82

(from Phase I Mail Survey)

n = 224

Service	Percent of Respondents
Orientation	75.0
Intake and assessment	72.8
Career counseling	68.3
Prevocational training	63.4
Translation/interpretation	62.9
Job placement	59.8
Social adjustment	58.5
Outreach/referral	58.0
Health care provision or referral	54.0
Vocational training	45.1
Transportation	40.2
Home management	37.9
Housing referral	34.8
Child care	24.6
Mental health counseling	24.1
Sponsor training	21.4
Legal assistance	13.8
Other services	25.4

Costs and Resources

According to the Phase I Survey, more than 98% of the fiscal resources for refugee English language training programs came from the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Since the survey included only programs receiving some ORR funding, programs which may have been training refugees without any ORR support were not represented. Adult Basic Education (ABE) funds were the most common source of additional funds for English language training, with about half of the service providers receiving ABE funds. Overall, the ORR funding per program had a median value of $56,110 in FY 1981 and $45,621 in FY 82. It is estimated that $29,201,062 in ORR funds were expended in FY 82 for ELT. This means that about 43% of the FY 82 ORR social service dollars ($67,571,000) were directly applied to refugee English language training.

Median reported cost per student instructional hour was $2.00 in FY 81 and $2.31 in FY 82. Though the absolute cost has increased somewhat over the two years, the increase is relatively small after the high general inflation of that period is considered. In some cases an increase in costs may be associated with increase in instructional costs, such as teacher salaries or a decrease in class size. Table II-2 shows the distribution of cost per student instructional hour in FY 1982. Although there is a wide range of reported costs, nearly 60% of the programs reported costs under $3 per student hour. Classroom observations conducted in Phase II indicate that official enrollment and actual attendance tend to differ, with actual attendance substantially lower than enrollment. Administrators should be aware that this discrepancy may distort calculations of costs per instructional hour based on enrollment rather than attendance figures.

Program administrators interviewed during on-site visits to 22 selected programs identified the uncertainty and unpredictability of federal funding as

a major obstacle to effective program planning. Short-term funding cycles, they said, make it difficult to retain expert teachers and to make long-term planning decisions. Nevertheless, most programs reported in the Mail Survey that ORR funding has enhanced the overall quality of their training.

Table II-2

NORMATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COST PER REFUGEE STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL HOUR IN FY 82

(from Phase I survey)

n = 150

Cost Per Student Instructional Hour	Percent of Programs	Cumulative Percent
Less than $1.00	10	10
$1.00 to $1.99	27	37
$2.00 to $2.99	22	59
$3.00 to $3.99	9	68
$4.00 to $4.99	7	75
$5.00 to $5.99	2	77
$6.00 to $6.99	1	78
$7.00 to $7.99	2	79
$8.00 or more	21	100

Programs have exhibited much flexibility in responding to the vicissitudes in program funding. Discussions with program administrators indicate that programs are constantly seeking ways to make the best use of available funds and to lessen the impact of short funding cycles and funding cuts. For example, many programs have formed consortia with other local programs to avoid duplication of services; some have cut class hours but retained the same class size; others have opted to offer fewer and larger classes but to keep the same number of class hours. A few institutions have actively expanded the volunteer component of their programs, using VISTA volunteers or students from

local universities to supplement their paid teaching staff. Others have combined funding sources to assure continued training for students whose eligiblity for ORR-funded training has lapsed.

The Impact of Individual Refugee Characteristics on English Language Training and Acquisition

In all phases of the study, individual background characteristics were found to exert a powerful influence on English language training and acquisition. Throughout this report, the effects of variables such as age, sex, education in the native country, literacy, and bilingualism will be considered. Southeast Asian refugees are not a homogeneous group, historically or culturally. The refugees entering this country differ widely in previous education, literacy skills, and previous English language training. For example, both the Community Survey and the Phase III data indicate that at all ages, men have had considerably more education than their female peers: Men average 6.4 years of education whereas women average 3.7 years. Younger people have had more education in their native countries than their older counterparts, reflecting the recency of popular education in the countries of origin. Various population groups have also differed in their access to education and literacy training: For example, the Community Survey found an average of 1.3 years of previous education for Hmong adults compared with 7.9 years for Vietnamese adults. Other characteristics are distributed differently. For example, the Hmong show the highest rates of bilingualism in languages other than English.

Refugees' background characteristics emerge as important predictors of their participation in English language training programs, classroom behavior, and English proficiency levels. Care has been taken in the analyses of the

various data sets to isolate the effects of each variable, since so many background characteristics are themselves highly intercorrelated. Details of these analyses will be discussed in the following sections, and further information is available in the technical reports.

Previous English Language Training in Country of Origin and Refugee Camps

English language proficiency at the time of U.S. entry turns out to be an important predictor of proficiency levels attained later and perhaps of refugees' eventual economic adjustment as well. Analyses of both the Phase II Community Survey data and the Phase III data indicate that, not surprisingly, ELT prior to U.S. entry is the major determinant of proficiency levels at entry.

There have been two sources of pre-entry ELT: in the country of origin (usually as part of schooling) and in the refugee camps. Relatively few Southeast Asian refugees have had any ELT in their native countries: 17% of the Community Survey sample and 24% of the Phase III cohort. (The higher figure for the Phase III group is due to their higher level of education.) Those who did receive some ELT in their native country tended to be the educated, the young, and, disproportionately, men. ELT in the native countries was generally substantial: Those who received some training reported receiving an average of over 500 hours.

Until fairly recently, access to ELT in refugee camps was also quite limited in much the same way. Among Community Survey participants, who we recall had entered the United States between mid-1979 and mid-1981, only 10% received any ELT in refugee camps. Those few individuals who did receive ELT in camps tended to be the same individuals who had already had ELT in their

countries of origin--the educated, the young and the men. During this period, then, pre-entry ELT tended very strongly to be an extension of Southeast Asian schooling.

As the camp programs funded by the U.S. Department of State moved into high gear, access to ELT dramatically widened. Over three-quarters (76%) of the Phase III cohort, which had entered the United States during the first half of 1982, had received some ELT in the camps. Thus, in a short period of time, access to pre-entry ELT had changed from an extension of training in Southeast Asia to a precursor of post-entry ELT in the U.S.

These recent increases in pre-entry English language training have planning implications for programs which have previously been serving refugees who had very little previous English training. Increased camp training particularly impacts the lowest levels of instruction. Program teachers interviewed on-site often commented that students in entry level classes appear better prepared now than students who arrived in previous years.

Participation in English Language Training Programs in the United States

Findings from both the Community Survey and the Phase III Longitudinal Study show that a very large majority of the adult refugee population takes part in English language training in the United States. Nearly three-quarters of the Community Survey population (the group which had been in the United States between one and three years) have utilized English language training. Those who participated in post-entry training reported receiving an average of slightly less than 700 instructional hours in the U.S. In the Community Survey, there is little overall difference among either the four cities surveyed or among the three population groups studied in the percentage served

or the number of hours of English language training received in the United States.

Refugee Characteristics and Program Participation

Differences in English language training participation in the United States emerge with respect to age, sex, and educational background. There is little apparent change in utilization of language training services among individuals up to the age of 50. Among those 50 or older, training utilization declines rapidly, particularly after 60. In all age groups, men utilize English language training more than women do: Overall, 81% of men vs. 67% of women have attended. This gender difference is particularly striking among the older groups. Table II-3 illustrates utilization by age and sex, based on the Community Survey data.

Table II-3

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES

By Age and Sex
(From Phase II Community Survey)

	Per Capita Instructional Hours			% Served		
Age	Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All
20-29	411	714	573	70	86	79
30-39	496	630	567	78	85	82
40-49	431	672	558	72	84	78
50-59	195	421	303	47	74	61
60+	44	125	83	10	26	18
ALL	390	622	512	67	81	74

Community Survey data also show differences ... utilization by educational status: Among those individuals who have taken some English language training in the United States, those with some previous education received an average of 38% more hours of instruction than those with no previous education. Individuals with previous schooling are more likely to participate in English language training, and also stay in programs longer. This may indicate that programs are better suited to the needs of educated (or literate) clientele; this possibility will be further explained in subsequent sections of the report.

Time in the United States

Results from all three phases of the study suggest that refugees enroll in English language training programs soon after their arrival. Participants in the Phase III Longitudinal Study show a very high rate of participation in English language training within even their first three months in the U.S. The Phase I Mail Survey indicates that more than half of refugee students enrolled in local programs had arrived within the past twelve months, and nearly one-third of the students had enrolled within six months after their arrival in the United States. Of the more than 400 randomly selected students from the classes observed in Phase II, 60% indicated that they had been in the United States a year or less; 80% had been here 18 months or less.

Despite these clear patterns in participation, multivariate analyses of Community Survey data are able to account for only 14% of the variance in individuals' participation in terms of these variables. The strongest predictor of utilization is time in the United States. The longer a refugee has been here, the more likely he or she is to have participated in ELT. Lower age and greater literacy ability are also predictors, indicating that

older and nonliterate students are utilizing ELT less than their younger and literate peers. Similarly, even after effects of other variables are held constant, analyses show that more men attend ELT than women. As we will see below, situational variables not measured, such as the availability of child care, the compatibility of class schedules with working hours, etc., are likely to be influencing ELT utilization.

Profile of Student Characteristics

The preceding section has considered some of the factors affecting program participation. Before discussing issues of program effectiveness, it may be helpful to profile the students actually attending programs at the time of the study. Table II-4 displays the characteristics of students enrolled in the 232 programs responding to the Phase I Mail Survey, a picture which agrees with the profile, also shown, of the characteristics of the students in the 22 programs in which Phase II classroom observations were conducted. As the table shows, the large majority of students are between 24 and 44, and slightly more men than women attend programs. Ethnic groups are represented in about their proportion to the refugee population as a whole. Programs are serving many students with limited educational background--well over half have had six years or less of previous schooling. Finally, the table shows that most participants have been in the U.S. for less than 18 months.

These results are generally consistent with the service utilization profile of refugees from the Community Survey. Although there is a greater apparent disparity between men's and women's utilization rates (81% vs. 67%) in those data than are evident here, the present data (especially the Phase II students) are weighted towards the lower instructional levels.

English Language Training Participation and Employment

The results of all project Phases suggest that working and going to English class during the same time period tend to be mutually exclusive for most refugees. In the Phase III Longitudinal Study group, which had been in the United States for 12 months or less, there was a moderately negative relationship between the number of hours worked and the number of hours of English language training taken. That is, more work is associated with less ELT and vice versa. Of the group, 16% both worked and attended ELT during the time period measured, 70% either only worked or only went to English language training, and 14% did neither. Those who work while taking English language training work slightly fewer hours than those who work but do not attend classes.

Some other factors also appear to affect the relationship between English language training utilization and employment. Phase III participants who had been in the country longer tended either to both take English language training and work or to do neither, whereas the more recently arrived participants tended to take English language training only. Men simultaneously worked and took ELT more than women, whereas women did neither more often than men did neither.

Although these Longitudinal Study (Phase III) participants were all relatively recent arrivals, similar results emerged from the Community Survey, whose respondents had been in the U.S. between one and three years. Few refugees work and take English language training at the same time as resettlement progresses: In cities where relatively large numbers of refugees are currently employed, relatively few refugees participate in English language training, whereas in cities where relatively few refugees are working, many more are participating in English language training.

Table II-4

PROFILE OF REFUGEE STUDENTS

		National Profile from Phase I Mail Survey (FY 82)	Phase II Students (April-June 1982)
Age	24 or under	31.0%	29.1%
	25-34	39.0%	37.6%
	35-44	19.0%	18.1%
	45 and over	11.0%	15.2%
Sex	Male	58.0%	54.1%
	Female	42.0%	45.9%
Ethnicity	Vietnamese	36.4%	36.5%
	Khmer	15.6%	19.9%
	Lao	18.8%	16.8%
	Hmong	10.5%	15.3%
	Mien	2.4%	4.1%
	Ethnic Chinese	13.2%	7.4%
	Other	4.0%	0.0%
Previous Education	0 years	15.2%	30.5%
	1-3 years	19.6%	9.8%
	4-6 years	29.5%	21.0%
	7-12 years	31.5%	35.9%
	13+ years	4.2%	2.8%
Literate in Some Language		81.2%	80.4%
Length of Residence in U.S.	0-6 months	30.5%	20.2%
	7-12 months	27.1%	40.2%
	13-18 months	15.1%	19.1%
	19-24 months	16.6%	8.7%
	25-30 months	5.3%	5.5%
	31-36 months	2.7%	4.2%
	36+ months	2.6%	2.1%

Program Exit

Although analysis of the available data sets has identified important factors affecting refugees' overall participation and nonparticipation in language training programs, little information is available about participants' exit from programs. In the opinion of respondents to the Phase I Mail Survey, who were primarily program administrators, most students leave programs for reasons considered to be desirable outcomes. Those respondents reported that 31% of the students who leave the programs do so for reasons of employment; 25% because they have completed the program; 12% to enroll in vocational training; and 8% to enroll in an academic program. The validity of such estimates is uncertain because few programs follow up on program leavers. Little information from students themselves is available to examine for the possible effects of other factors such as state-mandated hour limitations, discouragement with learning English, scheduling conflicts, etc.

Barriers to Participation

Judging from the high participation rates of Southeast Asian refugee adults, programs have succeeded in making English instruction available to most refugees. Despite these high rates of overall utilization, it appears that certain segments of the refugee population, particularly the elderly, women, nonliterate and employed adults, may participate less. And study findings indicate a small but significant fraction of the adult refugee population does not participate in ELT programs at all. On the whole, such nonparticipation does not seem related to some programs having a waiting list for program entry. Long waits to enter programs are not common. Only one-fourth of the programs reported having waiting lists to enter their programs; this is more common for the larger programs in highly impacted

areas. Even where waiting lists exist, refugees on the list wait an average of only 5-1/2 weeks to enter the program.

Thus factors other than program accessibility per se are responsible for a minority of refugees' nonparticipation. Do these individuals simply choose not to attend English language training at all; are they effectively prevented from attending because of structural barriers; or do programs not serve their needs? Discussions with students indicate that a variety of factors play a part in determining whether refugees attend English language training. Although programs appear broadly accessible to most refugees, some barriers to participation can be readily identified.

Socioeconomic Barriers

Lack of child care is very often identified as a substantial barrier to participation, especially by women. One refugee woman, not attending English classes, asked through an interpreter,

> Can you find someone to take care of my children? If only someone would take care of my children, I would study all the time. I want to learn English so much.

Of the 22 programs visited during this study, only two provide child care. Many programs, however, offer both daytime and evening sessions so that child care can be shared within or among families. An administrator of a program which provides county-funded child care in the same building as English classes said, "This program would be decimated if we didn't have child care. Only about one-half of the students who come would still be able to attend."

Discussions with over 400 students suggest that they generally choose to attend a particular program either on the recommendation of a helping agency or friend or because it is conveniently located. That location is important to participation is further evidenced by the fact that three-quarters of the

students said they walk or take public transportation to class. The Phase I Mail Survey and the discussions with teachers and administrators in Phase II reveal that if programs are located far from students' residence, inadequate transportation becomes a real barrier to participation. Programs have attempted to make instruction more convenient and accessible in various ways, especially by establishing special "branches" of their institutions in neighborhoods of high refugee impact, even within housing projects. Other programs have provided bus passes or van transportation to students without private vehicles or the means to pay for public transportation.

Affective Factors

Teachers, students, and administrators also identified factors such as trauma, depression, and mental and physical health problems--many apparently the result of experiences as refugees--as reasons some adults do not participate in programs. Although these problems are not within the direct control of English language training programs, many programs are operated by multiservice agencies, some of which provide mental health services.[1] English language training programs often employ bilingual aides who offer informal counseling to students with emotional or resettlement problems; such assistance appears to facilitate students' general acculturation and adjustment. One bilingual aide described the different tasks she is called upon to perform:

> I take attendance, do clerical work, operate AV equipment, translate, help students in class when they don't understand a lesson, help them deal with their welfare workers, help them fill out applications, counsel them on personal problems.

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[1]Often such services as counseling are provided by bilingual paraprofessionals.

In fact, many bilingual aides and administrators with whom we spoke suggested that English language training programs in this way provide the most important assistance many refugees have for overcoming adjustment and personal problems. An administrator of one large program aptly described the social functions English language training programs often serve:

> The program fills out a social need that the community can't fulfill in other ways. English class is a good use of time; it is part of the culture of transition. Students get a lot of group support in class--they don't feel so alone. They get a sense of community, and that's very important. Many students have adjustment problems--classes are very good for them.

III

REFUGEES' ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH

Southeast Asian adult refugees coming to the United States face many of the same challenges in learning a new language that previous groups of adult immigrants have faced. If history is any guide, the extent to which these adult refugees will learn English will vary widely, and some adults, particularly the elderly, may never develop even marginal proficiency in English. A second important historical lesson is that some adults will acquire English as a second language without any formal language training at all. In general, it seems that acquisition of English results from varied combinations of contacts with the language--taking ELT; communication on the job; contacts with English speaking friends; exposure to the media, etc.

Thus, to assess the impact of ELT on adult refugees' English acquisition, it must be viewed against the wider backdrop of the population's overall acquisition of the language. Examining ELT in sharp relief against the on-going acquisition of English in the adult population will help to (1) more accurately measure program impact, a critical step for justifying ELT costs in an era of tightening federal budgets; (2) determine the extent to which existing programs are effectively serving various segments of the target population (e.g., the elderly, the nonliterate); (3) facilitate program design for the various segments; and (4) where necessary, help identify service priorities on a national basis.

This chapter therefore begins with findings about Southeast Asian adult refugees' overall acquisition of English in the United States. One major finding is that previous educational experience is the most important factor in learning English in the United States. Persons with higher levels of

general education both arrive in the United States with higher levels of English proficiency and subsequently attain higher levels of English proficiency as well, at least for the time period (up to 3 years) studied here. The data also suggest that both literacy and previous knowledge of a second language (other than English) enhance English language acquisition, although these effects are not as strong as those of previous education.

In general, men develop more proficiency in English than women do. However, most of this difference disappears when educational background is taken into account; in both the countries of origin and in the camps, women have had less education than men. Although much of the gender difference in linguistic status is attributable to these differences in educational background, further analysis indicates that even among previously uneducated adults, men attain somewhat higher levels of English proficiency. These residual effects of gender may be due to a variety of variables not measured in the study, such as differential expectations placed on women, differential opportunities for contact with English speakers, etc.

Age is also related to language acquisition; younger refugees tend to acquire English more quickly and to reach higher proficiency levels than older persons. Although younger adults generally have had more previous education than their older counterparts, even among persons of equivalent educational background, younger people still experience greater success in learning English.

Following a more detailed discussion of the effects of background characteristics and affective variables on English acquisition, the influence of ELT will be considered. Results from all phases of the project show that participation in English language training does indeed contribute significantly to refugees' English acquisition. When effects of demographic

and background characteristics are controlled, those who take some ELT become more proficient in English than those who do not participate in formal language training. These findings are important evidence of the overall effectiveness of the ELT program in refugee resettlement.

Finally, the relative effects of employment on English acquisition will be considered. Although ELT seems to facilitate acquisition of a wide range of competencies, employment in the United States appears to facilitate acquisition only for refugees who have already attained higher levels of English proficiency. Judging from these data, it appears that during the initial months of resettlement, work per se does not contribute to increased English ability as much as does participation in English language training.

Refugees' Acquisition of English: Effects of Background Characteristics

Several kinds of information point to the effects of refugees' background characteristics and pre-entry experiences on their English acquisition. The composition of the classrooms observed during the site visits reflects the apparent effects of background characteristics: Beginning level classes contain disproportionate numbers of nonliterates, women and elderly students; higher level classes contain relatively more men, younger persons and literates.

Program staff are well aware of how background characteristics affect students' progress. To tap relevant local program experience the Phase I Mail Survey asked program administrators to estimate the number of hours it would take each of four prototypic refugee students to reach different competency levels: survival English, simple conversational English, and English sufficient to look for a job. Their estimates and the corresponding instructional cost per student to attain the given competencies (which we

calculated from their reported cost per student hour) are presented in Table III-I. These estimates are presented as median rather than mean values because some respondents indicated that certain students might never attain the higher proficiency levels (regardless of how much instruction was available). For example, thirty percent of the local providers reported that refugee (a) would never achieve a level of English proficiency sufficient for independent job search. The ramifications of this are profound. About 11% of the United States refugee population falls in the age range of this prototypic refugee. Although the extent of nonliteracy for this group as a whole is unknown, a substantial proportion of older Southeast Asian refugees entering the United States is not literate.

There are thus many indications that refugees' characteristics profoundly influence their learning of English, their participation in programs and the costs of serving them effectively. Assessing the impact of service thus requires a careful analysis of how these demographic variables and background experiences affect overall acquisition of English (by both students and nonstudents).

Progress in English acquisition was measured by self-ratings of proficiency in the Phase II Community Survey and by both standardized tests and self-ratings in the Phase III Longitudinal Study. Community Survey respondents rated their language proficiency on a five-point scale, for both their first month in the U.S. and the time of the survey. They also rated their competence at performing each of several specific language tasks. The validity of such self-ratings, routinely used in survey research measuring linguistic status, has generally been uncertain. Their validity for Phase III participants was examined through the observed correlation between the B.E.S.T. test scores and the self-ratings. Self-ratings of overall

TABLE III-I

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MEDIAN NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS REQUIRED AND ESTIMATED INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS FOR PROTOTYPIC REFUGEE ADULTS TO ACHIEVE THREE LEVELS OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

(n = 139)

	English Proficiency Level		
	"Survival" (e.g., can take the bus, count money, get help in emergencies)	Can carry out simple conversations in English on several topics with acquaintances	Can look for a a job on his/her own
(a) M. is a 50-year-old woman from a pre-literate group, who came to the U.S. in 1980, after spending three years in a refugee camp. She does not read or write in her own or any other language, and does not speak any but her native language. She was a farmer in her country, and American culture is totally new to her. She has a large family and, outside ESL class, has few contacts with English speakers.	230 hrs. $540	500 hrs. $1,095	1,000 hrs. $2,538
(b) K. is a 35-year-old man who lived in rural areas in his country where he was a blacksmith. He sometimes traded with other groups and learned to speak another language within his native country. He has never been to school, but he learned to read a little of the national language, which does not have a Roman alphabet. In the refugee camps, his friends taught him to read and write a little bit in his own language.	150 hrs. $360	350 hrs. $750	600 hrs. $1,314
(c) K. is a 24-year-old man who came here in 1980 from a medium-sized city. He was a radio operator in the military. He went to school for 4 years, where he learned to read and write his own language. Before he came to the U.S., K. studied English for 12 weeks in a refugee camp, but he never studied any other second language.	90 hrs. $140	200 hrs. $439	380 hrs. $805
(d) S. is a 30-year-old man who came here in 1980. In his country, he had nine years of education. He ran a small business in the capital city there. Besides being able to read and write in his native language, S. speaks another trade language of his area. S. studied English for 12 weeks before coming here.	57 hrs. $186	150 hrs. $320	250 hrs. $526

proficiency correlate fairly well with test scores (r = 0.66), indicating that individuals do tend to rate their language abilities accurately and that such self-perceptions can provide a useful picture of language acquisition in the community.

In both the Phase II Community Survey and the Phase III Longitudinal Study, language proficiency data were collected for two points in time; in each data set, some refugees had and some had not participated in English language training programs between the two time points. Analyses of these data identified a variety of variables affecting adult refugees' English acquisition. In all analyses, whether using standardized test scores or self-ratings, individuals' demographic characteristics and pre-entry experiences are highly predictive of the levels of English subsequently attained.

English Proficiency at Entry

English proficiency at U. S. entry is strongly affected by individuals' demographic characteristics and experiences in Southeast Asia. Previous education exerts a particularly strong influence on the amount of English which refugees initially acquire. In the Longitudinal Study cohort, over 56% of the variance in scores on the initial test of English proficiency was accounted for by previous educational level alone. Among Community Survey respondents, analysis of English ability in the first month similarly shows that previous education is the most potent predictor of proficiency ratings.

Bilingualism (involving a language other than English) is also a significant predictor of English proficiency during the first month after arrival. Age and sex do not predict first month proficiencies once the effects of education are held constant. That initial skill level is so

strongly related to education is not surprising, since the most common way to learn English in the native countries was in schools rather than through pre-entry contacts with native English speakers.

Gain in English Proficiencies

Both the self-ratings of Community Survey respondents at the time of the survey, one to three years after entry, and the Phase III post-test scores show that previous education continues to exert a strong influence on language learning after arrival in the U.S. Among those respondents with 12 or more years of education, 88% reported having reached "survival" levels of English by the time of the survey, whereas only 44% of those with no previous education attained this proficiency. The effects of education are even more apparent as the criterion increases: Of those with 12 or more years of education, 77% reported they had sufficient English skills to look for a job on their own at the time of the survey, whereas only 6% of those who had had no previous education reported they could do so.

The strongest predictor of the score on the post-test administered in Phase III is the individuals' pre-test score. If pre-test scores are not considered, the post-test scores are predicted by education, age, gender, and the number of languages spoken besides English. Among this cohort, variables accounting for most of the gain in English proficiency include education, previous literacy, and gender.

Using the longer acquisition period measured in the Community Survey, discriminant analyses were conducted to predict which individuals actually learned a specified English proficiency (among those who reported not having the proficiency at the first time point). Once again, education and age

emerge as the strongest predictors of gain. Literacy ability and time in the United States are weaker predictors, having approximately equal potency.

Refugees themselves are aware of how their pre-entry experiences affect their ability to learn English. Many see English language training as a means of assistance. A 23-year-old woman with no prior education described the difficulties of learning English without prior education:

> Everything is hard. I just started to go to school in this country so it is very hard. If there is an easier way to learn, I don't know it. I want to know English, so I come to school.

Some of the relationships between English proficiencies and individual characteristics discussed above can be seen in breakdowns of English proficiency by various characteristics of refugees. Table III-2 displays breakdowns of self-reported English proficiency by various characteristics of Community Survey respondents. Respondents indicated whether they were able to perform each of four competencies in English and also rated their overall proficiency on a 1 (no English at all) to 5 (very good) proficiency scale. The specific competencies used correspond with those for which program administrators responding to the Phase I Mail Survey estimated the number hours of instruction needed for refugees to attain. "Survival" was defined as being able to take public transportation, make change, and get help in an emergency. The table shows clearly how the proficiency ratings and competency levels increase regularly as previous education increases. The strong effects of literacy and age are also clear. The weaker effects of bilingualism can also be seen.

Table III-2

ENGLISH PROFICIENCIES AT TIME OF COMMUNITY SURVEY

By Selected Population Characteristics

	Mean Proficiency Rating (1-5)	% Having Specific Competencies			
		"Survival"	"Talk with Friends"	"Talk with Strangers"	"Look for Job"
Previous Education					
None	1.61	44.3	29.5	20.7	6.3
1-3 yrs	2.24	58.3	55.0	47.7	23.9
4-6 yrs	2.46	70.9	65.5	59.4	35.7
7-11 yrs	3.15	82.6	87.8	84.6	69.2
12+ yrs	3.78	87.6	90.6	91.9	77.3
Speak a Second Language (excluding English)					
No	2.38	57.4	55.6	49.8	35.3
Yes	2.68	75.2	66.5	61.9	40.5
Literate in Some Language (excluding English)					
No	1.94	44.0	34.3	23.6	15.8
Yes	2.92	81.1	79.9	75.0	53.7
Age					
20-29	2.84	74.5	74.5	68.0	45.2
30-39	2.60	68.7	62.8	58.1	40.3
40-49	2.21	64.7	48.9	41.9	29.0
50-59	1.79	46.4	38.6	34.3	11.4
60+	1.39	21.8	14.3	10.7	7.3
Hours of ELT in the U.S.					
None	2.14	43.2	41.6	38.0	27.1
1-499	2.44	68.0	56.5	51.2	35.3
500-999	2.69	80.6	73.7	64.0	43.2
1000-1499	2.71	79.4	75.0	68.7	46.3
1500-1999	2.96	78.3	79.2	79.2	54.2
2000+	3.36	75.9	83.3	83.3	54.8

The table also indicates that as hours of English language training increase, proficiency levels increase as well, though not as markedly as with increasing years of prior education. This suggests, of course, a conclusion to be examined more closely below--that ELT indeed has an impact on English acquisition.

The Influence of Affective Factors on English Acquisition

Discussions with teachers and students reveal that affective factors play a role in refugees' acquisition of English. These factors cannot be quantified the same way as prior experiences such as years of education or demographic variables such as age, but they appear to contribute to progress in learning English and to ELT participation.

Numerous students described difficulties they have in learning English because of depression, trauma, or social adjustment problems. A 47-year-old woman explained:

> I am too worried to learn English. After my husband died and I was separated from my children, I think about it all the time and I can't learn.

When teachers were asked what factors they felt contributed most to success in learning English, affective factors were commonly mentioned. Teachers described attributes such as "motivation," "nerve," "not being shy," "not being afraid to make mistakes" as assets in learning English. Refugees themselves often explained how cultural differences and fear of making mistakes hinder progress in learning English: "Because I am new to this country, I'm afraid of not being understood. So for now I'm just concentrating on listening."

These affective barriers are often compounded by the lack of contacts with native English speakers. The relative isolation of recently-arrived refugees

from English speakers was mentioned by both teachers and refugees as a barrier to progress. Structured environments such as English class seem to constitute the most comfortable, and sometimes the only, opportunity to try out beginning English. A 34-year-old student with a sixth-grade education discussed how he practices speaking English:

> I watch TV to listen to the voices. If I talk to Americans, I am afraid they won't talk to me because I am a refugee. I like to talk to the teacher and practice with the teacher. Sometimes after class ends, I talk to the teacher and ask about class.

The Impact of ELT

The Community Survey data exhibit regular increases in English proficiency with increasing hours of ELT taken in the United States. After the powerful effects of prior education, literacy, and age are held constant statistically, ELT, length of residence in the U.S., and employment emerge as additional predictors of English language acquisition. The Longitudinal Study data similarly indicate that ELT is associated with increased proficiency gains, when the effects of educational background and age are held constant.

Because the tests in Phase III were administered soon after the refugees' arrival, the gains in test scores offer a clear picture of the effects of ELT on the early stages of English acquisition. Background factors again contribute most to overall English proficiency attained, but ELT participation also emerges as an important factor. These test data indicate that, given persons of similar background characteristics, those taking ELT acquire more English than those who do not. Multiple regression analysis of Community Survey data also shows that participation in ELT facilitates English acquisition and has the most impact on learning the "survival" levels; that is, programs appear to be most successful in bringing very low level students

up to survival level. Classroom observations (which will be discussed in greater detail below) are consistent with this picture, showing that beginning programs do in fact emphasize these basic life skills or "survival skills." This is not to say that ELT is effective only at basic levels, but that its effects are most pronounced where its programmatic focus lies.

ELT in Camp Programs

Relatively few of the adult refugees in the Community Survey sample, which entered the U. S. between mid-1979 and mid-1981, took ELT in the refugee camps. Camp programs were not fully operational at that time. About three-quarters of the Longitudinal Study cohort (which entered the U. S. during the first half of 1982 when program operations had greatly expanded), on the other hand, participated in camp ELT programs. For both populations, this pre-entry ELT had pronounced effects on English proficiency at U. S. entry, effects which apparently persist for quite some time after resettlement begins. Although ELT in the camps has a strong effect on refugees' initial level of English proficiency, ELT provided in the United States appears to have a much stronger effect on proficiency levels attained later in resettlement. Thus, ELT delivered in both settings is effective, but the long-term effects of training in the U.S. seem stronger.

Time in the United States

Although increases in English proficiency can be seen with time per se, the length of time in the United States is not a major predictor of refugees' English proficiency. At first this may seem puzzling. However, acquisition is probably stimulated by the particular experiences which engage individuals in English language use, such as ELT, on the job interactions, and friendships

with English speakers. Once the effects of these experiences are accounted for, the mere passage of time may have little residual effect on adult refugees' English acquisition.

The Relative Effects of ELT and Work

The analysis of the Community Survey data indicates that both ELT and employment contribute to English acquisition. The Phase III Longitudinal Study was specifically designed to test further the relative impact of early employment and early English language training on gains in English proficiency during the initial resettlement period. Multivariate analyses of the changes in individuals' test scores over time in relation to their background characteristics and experiences between the two time points (i.e., amount of work, amount of ELT) give some clearcut answers. As in the other analyses previously described, background characteristics are the predominant determinants of adult refugees' English acquisition. Previous education, literacy, gender and age are strongly related to the level of English proficiency attained.

Aspects of these relationships are displayed in Figure III-1, which shows how pre- and post-test scores are related to important background characteristics: age (panel a), gender (b), previous schooling (c) and literacy (d). Each panel shows the pre- and post-test scores for different segments of the cohort. The slope of the line represents the gain in proficiency. For example, the lines for men and women, shown in panel (b), are parallel, suggesting similar acquisition rates for men and women even though the men enter the United States with higher initial levels. The divergence of the lines for literates and nonliterates in panel (d) suggests quite a different situation holds with regard to literacy. Not only do

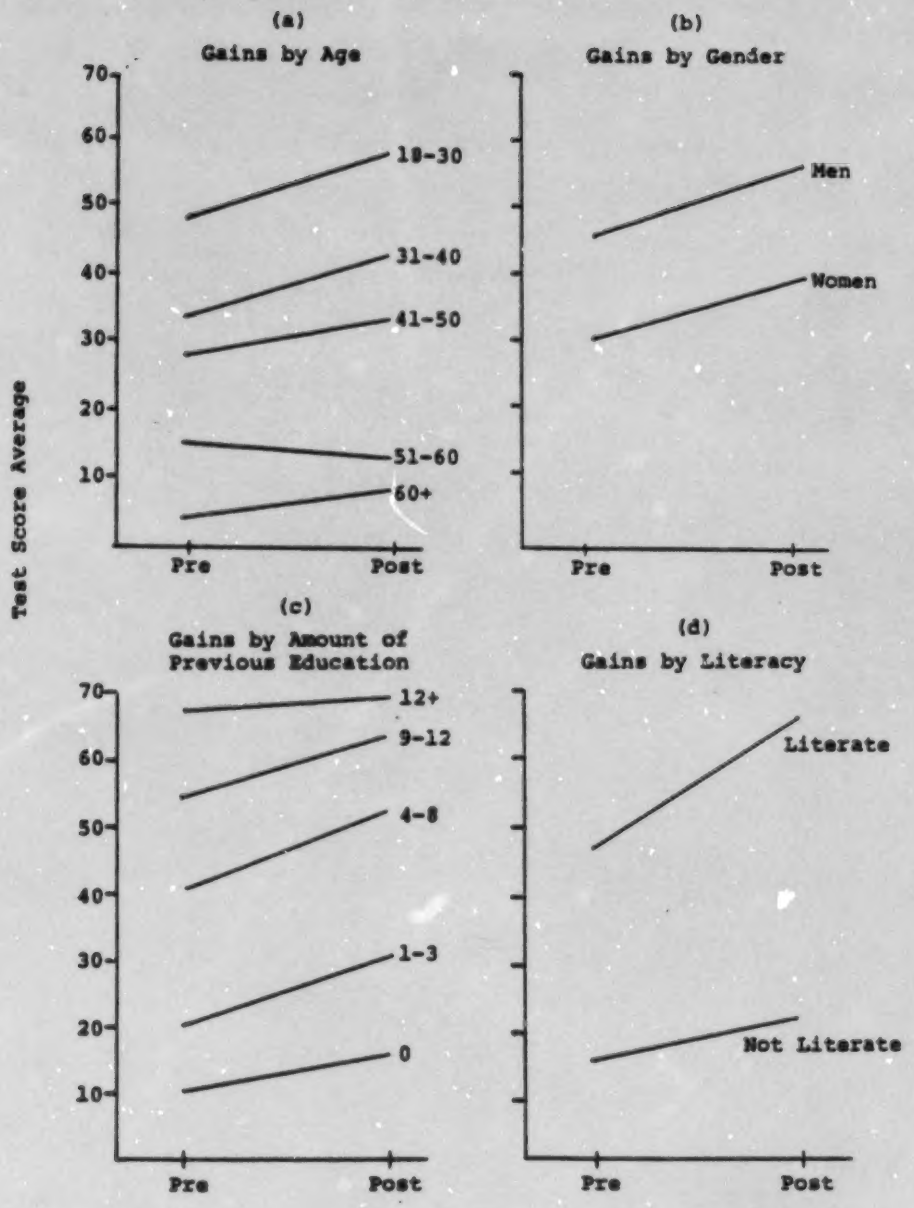

Figure III-1: Relationship Between Gains in English Proficiency and Population Characteristics

literates tend to enter at higher levels, but they also tend to acquire additional proficiency more quickly. Effects of education and age can also be seen in the separations of the lines for the various age and education strata, even though the relationship of slope to these variables appears more complex.

Once the effects of these and other background variables are held constant statistically, the effects of reported amounts of ELT participation and work experience can be assessed. Using multiple regression analysis, ELT emerges as a significant predictor of English acquisition while employment does not. These results are illustrated in graphs in Figure III-2. The four lines in the figure represent different segments of the Longitudinal Study population: Individuals who worked between the two time points, individuals who took some ELT during that period, individuals who did both and individuals who did neither. Looking first at the "Neither" and "Work Only" lines, a slight overall gain can be seen. The parallel slopes of the two lines reflect what the statistical analyses indicated: Work experience per se does not increase the gain. The fact that the "Work Only" line is higher reflects the fact that those having more English proficiency (at the pre-test) are more likely to be working.

The gains in English proficiency are significantly higher for those who take ELT, a finding reflected in the higher slopes of the "ELT Only" and "Work/ELT" lines. The highest gains are in the "ELT Only" group.

Thus, results of the Longitudinal Study data agree with those of the Community Survey data: After the effects of background characteristics are taken into account, ELT has a demonstrable positive effect on English acquisition. Unlike the Community Survey results, however, the Longitudinal Study analysis finds no evidence that work experience has a positive effect.

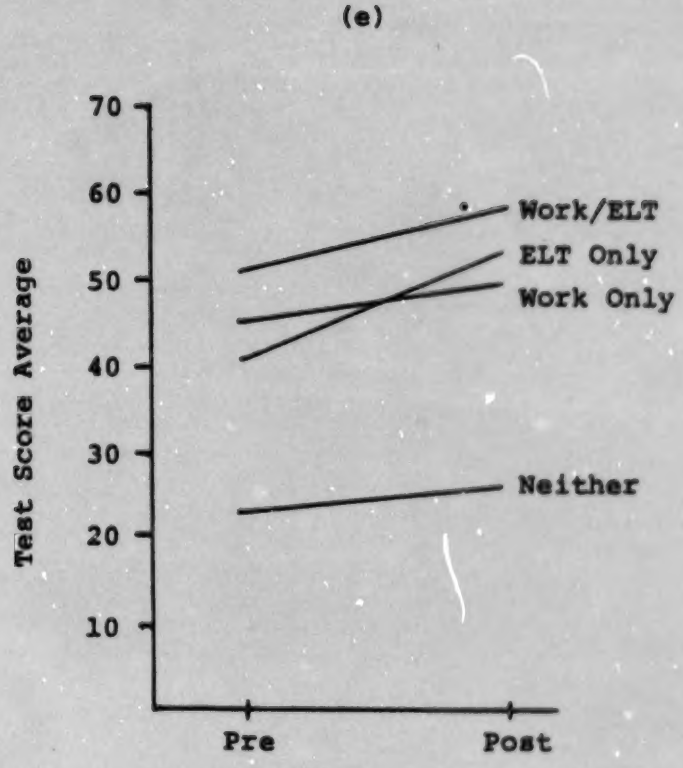

Figure III-2: Relationship Between Gains in English Proficiency and Work/ELT Experience

The most plausible interpretation of this difference between the two sets of findings is that the Community Survey involved a refugee population which had been in the United States one to three years, whereas the Longitudinal Study involved a more recently arrived population. Thus it may be the case that ELT is more effective than employment <u>early</u> in refugees' resettlement, but as their resettlement continues, work experience begins to have an impact on their acquisition of English. In any event, there is <u>no</u> evidence in any phase of the project that suggests that an early emphasis on getting refugees into the workplace is a better strategy than ELT for stimulating English acquisition. The data at hand indicate that, at least during the initial period of resettlement, ELT participation is likely to be more effective.

Summary

This chapter has discussed how refugees' English language acquisition and participation in ELT programs are closely related to their demographic and educational characteristics. Although these effects are very strong, ELT nevertheless plays an important role in refugee English language acquisition. On-site observations and discussions with teachers, students and administrators suggest that certain program design features, such as class size, class composition, class differentiation, teaching staff characteristics and instructional features may influence success. These features are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR ADULT REFUGEES

Hundreds of hours of structured classroom observations in Phase II recorded in great detail what teachers and students do in refugee English language training classrooms.[2] An assumption underlying the observational work was that language behavior observed in the classroom is related to language use outside the classroom. Unfortunately the methodology of the study was such that the correspondence between the two could not be measured. Although analyses of the observations provide a descriptive perspective on the range and variation of instructional practices and student behaviors in the classroom, it remains difficult to state which student behaviors observable in class constitute valid measures of successful learning, since effective instruction must be measured against outcome goals. Goals may differ for particular programs and individual students. A nonliterate older student, for example, may view learning to write her name as a success, whereas a highly educated younger student may view success in terms of acceptance into an academic or vocational training program.

With these limitations in mind, this chapter describes the organization and process of instruction observed in the 22 programs visited. The results of extensive classroom observations and on-site discussions with program students and staff are grouped in three sections: (1) characteristics of English language training teaching staff; (2) organizational features of programs, with particular attention to how patterns of organization affect

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[2]The complete results of these observations can be found in the technical report for Phase II of this project.

student classroom behavior; (3) a summary of instructional approaches, techniques and materials being used in English language training for refugees and the ways in which instructional practices are related to student behavior and language use in class. These results cannot reveal what "works" best for every refugee student; as we have seen in the previous chapters, success in language acquisition is greatly affected by factors outside program or teacher control. What the classroom observation can tell us is what instructional approaches seem to produce various kinds of speech behavior within classrooms. The classroom observations combined with discussions held with students, teachers and administrators reveal that certain instructional approaches and classroom organizational patterns appear to encourage increased use of English speech in classrooms.

Teaching Staff

Qualifications

The most frequently cited requirements for full-time teachers in ELT programs serving refugees are a B.A. degree and teaching certificate. However, full-time teachers make up only a small minority of ELT teaching staff. Fifty-seven percent of the local service providers surveyed in Phase I reported having no full-time paid teaching staff. In fact, program prerequisites for part-time teachers generally equal or exceed those for full-time teaching positions. Part-time teachers are usually required to hold a B.A. degree and have a teaching credential, and, more frequently than full-time teachers, are expected to have at least one year of relevant experience as well. Discussions held with teachers on-site indicated that teachers actively employed in refugee ELT programs greatly exceed the minimum

requirements programs have set for instructors; they have an average of four years' experience in teaching English or working with refugees.

Programs that emphasize job services and employment report having a greater number of full-time teachers, whereas community colleges tend to have fewer full-time teachers. Administrators and teachers interviewed on-site note that inability to hire sufficient full-time staff due to funding problems or policy restrictions greatly inhibits their programs' capacity to attract and keep professional teachers. Continuity and planning within programs becomes more difficult where staff turnover is high.

An administrator of a large, well-articulated program described the difficulties of having to staff a program with only part-time help:

> The biggest problem we have is not being able to keep staff, since college policy limits the number of hours they can teach. Our part-time teachers would want to stay if they could. We have some excellent staff. It is harder and harder to find anyone in this city with ESL experience--I think I have hired everyone with experience already.

Bilingual Capacity

Of the 22 programs and over 100 teachers observed in Phase II, 8.1% of the teachers were bilingual in one of the native languages of their students. Paraprofessional bilingual aides were present in only 10% of ELT classes. Although 42% of the local English language training service providers reported using bilingual personnel as classroom aides, a given bilingual staff person is commonly shared by many classes. In discussions with us, bilingual staff indicated that they are called upon to perform a wide variety of tasks in addition to their classroom duties, e.g., intake, counseling, and referral. Bilingual personnel feel that their effectiveness stems not only from direct contributions to instruction, but also from helping students with everyday problems and social adjustment.

In classes where teachers were bilingual, the native language is used in a variety of ways, ranging from conducting an entire ELT class in the native language at one extreme to conducting most of the class in English, using the native language only for short explanations. In classes with bilingual teachers, significantly more use of the native language by students was observed, though no corresponding decrease in students' English use was found.

Some beginning students commented that bilingual teachers were helpful at their level. For example, a student attending a bilingual program housed in a Mutual Assistance Association said:

> I would like to study at an 'American' English school, but is is too hard. Here they can help interpret, here our own teachers can explain better.

Teacher Effectiveness

In the Phase I Mail Survey, the factor most commonly mentioned by program administrators as enhancing program quality was skilled and sensitive classroom teaching staff. Teacher training, experience, and attitude are viewed by these respondents as the most important determinants of successful English language training for refugees. On-site discussions with administrators and teachers similarly indicated that service providers feel qualified teaching staff is a crucial program component. In addition to teacher experience and training, other initial attributes mentioned include the teacher's patience, cultural sensitivity, and motivation.

Although assessing teachers' effectiveness through limited classroom observations is quite difficult, certain conclusions can be drawn. Classroom observations do show that teaching style significantly influences student behavior in class. For example, although many student behaviors were not statistically related to the amount of experience a teacher has, a significant

correlation was found between teachers' experience and students' speaking more English on their own initiative in class. It appears that more experienced teachers tend to use less recitation-oriented activities, e.g., structured drills and question and answer exercises, and more activities that encourage spontaneous speech by the students.

The student behaviors measured in classroom--time on task,[3] spontaneous production of English speech and use of elaborated English speech--appear heavily influenced by individual teacher style. Statistical analyses suggest that a teacher's personal teaching style is an important determinant of what students do in class, and that as teachers gain experience they find more effective ways to encourage students to use English in the classroom and to focus on other classroom activities.

On-going Staff Training

Staff development efforts are common in ELT programs for refugees, but use of ORR funds for these activities has declined. Staff training is generally conducted in-house, by the State Coordinator's office or by professional associations, particularly state affiliates of TESOL. Although many teachers who participate are not paid for doing so, sessions are well attended. Program administrators and teachers alike indicate there are on-going staff development needs, particularly in new teaching approaches, cultural backgrounds of students, and instruction of nonliterate learners. Technical assistance that had been provided by the Center for Applied Linguistics, in particular, was highly regarded.

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[3]Time on task was defined as engaged learning time--i.e., students are paying attention, following the class, and participating.

Organization of Instruction

Instruction in programs is structured in several different ways including curricula, pedagogical differentiation of classes, and the size and composition of classes. Such organizing variables appear to affect not only the instructional approaches and techniques which teachers choose, but also the way students use language in class. Let us look briefly at each of these.

Curricula

Most ELT programs for refugees have instructional guidelines or curricula, the majority of which are developed at the local level. Eighty-two percent of Mail Survey respondents reported that they have local guidelines in place; only 22% of the responding State Coordinator offices have such guidelines for instruction. Discussions with teachers on-site indicate that two-thirds of the teachers follow curriculum guidelines for instruction; in most cases, however, teachers are given broad discretion as to the approaches and materials to be used in implementing curriulum objectives.

Eighteen of the 22 programs had a written curriculum. These curricula varied widely in their scope and specificity. Where state guidelines exist, programs use them as a curriculum guide or as a basis for local curriculum development. Some curricula are simply recommendations of certain books or materials to use at different instructional levels, whereas others specify competency objectives by level. The competency goals outlined in this latter type of curriculum usually include both linguistic skills and functional or "survival" skills that refugee students should achieve at different instructional levels. Many highly experienced administrators feel that a clearly outlined, competency-based curriculum is particularly effective for refugee students.

Need for Systematic Assessment. About one-half of the respondents in the Mail Survey indicated that their programs do not use any type of standardized assessment instrument. Discussions with teachers and program administrators during the Phase II site visits confirmed this general picture: Many programs are not systematically assessing and following their students' progress. In many cases, the reason for this was stated to be the lack of appropriate assessment instruments and procedures for Southeast Asian adults. With better assessment in place, program needs, effective curricular structure, and evaluation can be developed.

Differentiation and Specialization of Classes

In the previous chapter, we saw the strong influence of education, age, and prior literacy on adult refugees' English acquisition. Classroom observations indicate that these factors also play an important role in shaping student behavior in the classroom. Literacy in particular exerts an influence on student behavior in class, even after the effects of education have been taken into account. As will be further discussed in the section below on classroom instruction, much instruction implicitly assumes that students have literacy skills. It appears that classroom specialization by students' English proficiency level, and particularly by literacy, may be helpful to less literate students, for whom classes that depend on written material for instruction in both reading and speaking may be inappropriate. Surveys of local programs indicate that most service providers attempt to differentiate their courses according to refugees' characteristics, using prior literacy as a primary concern.

The importance of appropriate placement is illustrated by the comments of one student with very limited education and literacy skills who told us:

> The class is a little hard for me. I don't understand what they are doing or how to study. I just listen in class, don't do anything. What should I do? I can't follow this class.

Class Composition--Ethnic Mix

ELT providers have engaged in extensive debate on whether it is more effective to separate classes by ethnic groups or to mix groups within classes. Teachers and administrators offer mixed opinions on the effects of ethnic mix in class, some feeling strongly that classes should be differentiated by groups, others preferring to have classes mixed.

The data from classroom observations indicate that students are more likely to speak English to each other in mixed classes than in classes composed of primarily one ethnic group. Classroom observation found no evidence of conflict between ethnic groups when groups are mixed. Data from the classroom observations in general suggest that the ethnic mix and other dimensions of classroom composition have pervasive effects on the interactions between teachers and students and on interactions among students and are an important determinant of the types and amount of English spoken in the classroom. This will be discussed further in the following sections.

Class Size

Class size also emerges as an important factor in students' spontaneous usage of English in class--that is, on the incidence of students speaking English on their own initiative. Class size is a more powerful predictor of spontaneous speech than is either the students' background characteristics or proficiency level. Using one measure of the incidence of spontaneous speech

during a given observation time, class size alone predicted 24% of the variance among classes. In fact, none of the student characteristics aggregated for the class (age, gender mix, education, time in U.S.) except prior literacy is significantly related to this behavior. Using a measure which is sensitive to use of both "spontaneous" and "elaborated" speech, a similar pattern emerged: Although the average educational level of students is a significant predictor of behavior (8% of the variance), class size exerts a still stronger influence (10% of the variance).

These data suggest that the smaller the class size, the more opportunity students may have (or take) to use English spontaneously, regardless of the level of the class. Naturally, there is no one ideal class size. The classroom is not, of course, the only opportunity students may have to practice speaking, but on-site discussions with over 400 students indicate that for fully one-third of refugee students, particularly those at lower levels, the classroom is the only place they regularly speak English. Interviews with teachers and administrators corroborate the importance of class size; large class size was regularly mentioned as an obstacle to effective teaching and learning.

Classroom Instruction

Pedagogical Approaches

There is a wide range of instructional approaches and methods used in English language training for refugees. Across the nation, approaches ranging from the very traditional grammar-translation to the newer notional-functional methods can be found in English classes for Southeast Asian refugees. Although the traditional structuralist approaches are still in widespread use, the most typical classroom approach is somewhat eclectic, combining structural

approaches (which emphasize discrete parts of language) with more integrated approaches to language skills such as conversation and literacy. Most teachers exhibit flexibility in method, gearing teaching techniques to the proficiency level and size of the class. For example, at higher proficiency levels teachers tend to take a more unstructured approach, with students more likely to be encouraged to engage in conversation.

The greatest emphasis in ELT classes for refugees is on spoken English, though basic literacy also plays an important part in instruction. In over 70% of the classes, the teachers present English in written form at some time during the class hour, either as a medium of instruction for spoken English or for direct instruction in reading and writing skills. This finding has important implications for class differentiation and placement. Unless students' literacy status is considered in class placement, it appears that many nonliterate students may find inaccessible those portions of classroom instruction which assume literacy skills, since written materials are used extensively even at the lowest levels of instruction.

Discussions with students from the classrooms observed suggest that Southeast Asian refugee students depend on the teacher's judgment as to what approaches are most effective in teaching English and are reluctant to offer suggestions regarding teaching. Nonliterates with no previous schooling indicated, however, that despite their lack of literacy skills, they learn best when a highly structured, "step-by-step" instructional approach is used.

Lesson Content and Focus

About 50% of classroom time incorporates content areas generally considered to be "survival skills," including such topics as cultural orientation, consumer skills, housing, medical orientation, and employment

orientation. Employment-related ESL and vocational ESL are taught significantly more at higher levels of instruction, though at all levels observed, employment is emphasized much less than other content areas.

Lesson focus for most of the remaining 50% of observation time was on specific "language lessons," most commonly instruction in reading or writing, vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and general conversation. Although teachers regularly identified pronunciation as a particular problem for Southeast Asian refugees, observers noted pronunciation specifically targeted in only 20% of classes.

English is overwhelmingly the language of instruction in the ELT classroom. Fully 92% of instruction observed was conducted in natural, colloquial English. Few classes (8%) offered any form of bilingual instruction or translation into any of the native languages.

Materials. Most teachers highly emphasize literacy, either implicitly as a medium of instruction, or explicitly as the focus of lessons. This is sometimes the case even when many students are not literate. Table IV-1 shows the percentage of class time that teachers use various types of materials. Observers recorded "none" if the materials were not used at all; "some" if the materials were in use for less than half of the observation time; and "a lot" if materials were used for more than half of the observation time. The teachers' reliance on written materials in the ELT classroom can be seen in the table.

The table also shows that the use of technological aids such as films, audio tapes, or video is uncommon in refugee ELT classrooms, as is the use of tangible objects (sometimes referred to as "realia"). Further analysis of these data reveals that beginning level classes use tangible objects significantly more often than higher level classes. Teachers and

Table IV-1

MATERIALS

(from Phase II Classroom Observations)

To what extent did the teacher use:

Category	Number of Observations	Percent of Classes Using the Material Either		
		"None"	"Some"	"A Lot"
Board writing	668	49.1	21.4	29.5
Books	668	75.4	4.2	20.4
Worksheets	672	77.2	4.0	18.8
Literacy props	674	92.1	2.2	5.6
Drawings/photos	680	81.8	4.1	14.1
Films/videos	681	99.4	0.0	0.6
Tapes	682	97.8	0.4	1.8
Tangible objects	677	92.6	2.1	5.3

administrators interviewed felt that for beginning classes, especially classes for nonliterate students, tangible objects were very effective teaching tools, particularly if incorporated into physical activities or tasks in which directions were given in English. For example, one observed class, intended for nonliterate and beginning students, was conducted entirely in English but used actual sewing materials and sewing tasks as a means to teach the language.

Classroom observations and discussions with teachers and administrators indicate that although most programs have access to newly published books appropriate to refugee students, some programs are nevertheless highly isolated from information about current materials. Furthermore, a few programs simply cannot afford to purchase updated materials even if they are aware of them.

Classroom observations indicate that materials created by individual teachers and local programs are commonly used, particularly with nonliterate students, for whom appropriate commercial materials have not been available until very recently. Considerable effort has gone into development of these

local materials, which are seldom disseminated beyond the local area. These local efforts have not been sufficient, however; teachers told us that there is continued need for lower level materials appropriate for teaching literacy to non-native speakers, and higher level materials for vocationally-specific English. Locally produced materials may constitute an unidentified resource which, if more widely disseminated, could benefit refugee ELT efforts nationally.

Predictors of Student Behaviors

In addition to a composite picture of what teachers are doing in the classroom, we wanted to sketch student behavior as well, particularly English-related behaviors. We were particularly interested in what classroom factors are related to such behaviors.

Multivariate analyses of data from over 300 class hours of observation show that much of the variation in student behaviors in the classroom can be predicted by differences in experiences that students bring with them to ELT. The English proficiency level of students in classes is closely related to their prior education and literacy, gender, and age, corroborating previously considered findings showing the importance of background characteristics and previous experiences on English language behaviors.

Classroom observations indicate that students in more advanced classes engage more often in reading, speak more English overall and speak more complex English in class than do lower level students. Background variables such as age and sex account for up to 17% of the between-class variance in students' observed speech and reading behaviors. Structural aspects of the classroom, such as class size and ethnic mix, also predict student behaviors. Still, even after characteristics of student backgrounds and classroom

structure are taken into account, much of the variance in student behaviors remains to be explained. Some can be attributed to pedogogical features of the classroom. Let's examine how instructional features influence two gross measures of students' language-related behaviors.

Time on task. Refugee ELT class time is devoted almost exclusively to English language instruction. Teachers devote very little time to other tasks. Observations show students are also very much on-task in refugee English classrooms. They are paying attention and actively engaged throughout the instruction period. After the influence of class size and class level are held constant, the teaching patterns most associated with students being on-task are the use of books, class discussion, listening activities and direct instruction in reading and writing.

English speech in classrooms. Observers tracked both the amount of English spoken and a few features of the social context (e.g., with whom students spoke, whether the use of English was spontaneous or in response to teacher direction, and whether students "elaborated" on topics). As might be expected, the overall amount of English spoken in classrooms is closely related to the proficiency level of the class, with the highest incidence of English speech, particularly elaborated speech, noted at the highest levels. If we examine the amount of spontaneous speech occuring in classes, an additional factor enters--class size--with more spontaneous speech noted in smaller classes.

To see what teaching patterns might stimulate students' spontaneous or elaborated speech in English, the effects of class size and class level were held constant statistically, and the teacher and student behaviors were then correlated. Those teaching patterns that emerge as successful in eliciting speech, regardless of class level or class size, are:

- the use of discussion in class
- teacher/student role playing
- requesting student-student interactions
- classroom conversation
- use of a highly structured method of targeting students for response
- teacher's use of natural, colloquial English
- the teacher being on-task.

Socially interactive activities seem to encourage students' use of English, whereas recitation-type activities, such as structured pattern drills and structured question and answer sessions are associated with a lack of student-generated speech. Use of native language in class was found to correlate negatively with student-generated speech in English.

These findings do not suggest that practices such as pattern-practice drills, a very widespread technique in refugee ELT, or use of the native language in instruction, do not serve useful purposes. Many beginning students in bilingual programs told us they attended particular programs because someone there could "explain things" in their native language, whereas in other English programs they felt completely "lost." However, if the goal of a particular classroom is to encourage students to speak English on their own initiative, these techniques are not as effective as ones which encourage interaction in English among speakers in the classroom.

V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the major findings and conclusions of the Study of Refugee English Language Training. After a brief listing of the findings, implications for refugee resettlement policy and ELT programs are discussed and recommendations based on Study findings are presented.

Project Conclusions

- On the whole, English language training is widely accessible to adult refugees.
- A large proportion of recently arrived adult men and women refugees of all ages have participated in English language training programs.
- Refugee background and demographic characteristics are important predictors of English acquisition. Although individuals vary, on the whole:
  - previous education is by far the strongest predictor of success in learning English--individuals with more previous education learn faster and reach higher proficiency levels;
  - younger adults are learning English faster and reach higher proficiency levels than older adults;
  - nonliterates and women, both groups with historically less education in Southeast Asia, are having less success in learning English.
- Those individuals who have had the most previous education in their native countries are likely to obtain more English language training, both in refugee camps before United States entry and in the United States.
- Certain students, particularly those who have had no prior educational experience or literacy skills, and older students, may take considerably longer to reach given competencies in English than more educated, younger students. A small minority of adults, like other first generation immigrants before them, may never achieve minimal proficiency in English.

- English language training promotes English acquisition. Given individuals of similar background and demographic characteristics, participants in English language training gain more skills in English than non-participants do.

- Among recent arrivals, English language training promotes English acquisition more than employment does.

- Lack of child care constitutes a substantial barrier to participation in programs for many refugee women.

- Uncertain funding cycles and the inability to hire full-time staff hinder program effectiveness and continuity and make planning within programs problematic.

- Overall, English language training programs have proven flexible in creatively responding to changing students needs and vicissitudes of funding.

- In addition to facilitating the process of English acquisition, English language training programs constitute an important resource for adjustment and problem-solving for many refugees.

- Few programs conduct formal evaluations of their own progress; many feel formative evaluation would be helpful. Programs tend to focus on the instructional process rather than its outcomes.

- Appropriate assessment tools for placement and evaluation of student progress are needed in many programs.

- Knowledge of students' prior education and literacy may be helpful for placement purposes if other tools are unavailable.

- Continued teacher training and wider dissemination of assessment devices and instructional materials appropriate for refugee students, particularly nonliterates is likely to maximize program effectiveness.

- A wide range of instructional methods and approaches are used in refugee English language training.

- Teacher style and experience appear to influence the success of students in the classroom.

- Information about newly published materials and teaching techniques designed for refugee English language training reaches most programs, but some programs remain isolated from this information.

- Locally developed materials, particularly for nonliterate and VESL students, constitute an untapped resource for refugee English language training across the nation.

- Smaller class sizes and ethnically mixed classes stimulate more student use of English in class.
- At all levels, literacy forms the basis of much classroom instruction.
- Interactive activities promote increased use of English in classrooms. Students use each other as resources in learning.

Policy and Program Implications and Recommendations

Federal and State Issues in Resettlement

ORR funds provide for a wide range of services for refugee resettlement and self-sufficiency. A little less than half (43%) of the ORR social service dollar in FY 1982 was spent directly on refugee English language training. Although this project has primarily investigated factors which contribute to refugees' English acquisition rather than the effects of the mix of English language training and other services on self-sufficiency, the service mix remains an on-going issue in refugee resettlement policy.

Refugee background and policy planning. The findings of the project suggest that participation in English language training has contributed to refugees' English acquisition, although gains have varied for students of particular backgrounds. In spite of the many creative and innovative efforts to provide special training for nonliterate students and students of limited educational background, who represent a substantial portion of Southeast Asian refugees, programs on the whole remain best suited to the more literate, educated students. The effects of previous education, age and literacy on language acquisition are strong, regardless of program participation. Older and less educated refugees have less success in acquiring English. More instruction may be necessary to assist these

students to reach given levels of competency. Some refugees may never reach even "survival" level proficiency in English, regardless of how much instruction they receive. This is not really surprising. Historically, many first generation immigrants to this country have not learned English. The findings also suggests that those with the least education in their native country also receive less English language training in refugee camp programs as well as here in the United States. Rather than catching up to others, they remain at a disadvantage.

Policy somehow should recognize these striking trends. As refugees of different cultural and educational backgrounds enter the United States, policy planners should recognize the large differences in acquisition rates and ultimate achievement levels among subgroups of varying age and educational status. Uniform limitations on hours of English language training for all refugees, regardless of background, may not be realistic. At the same time, with limited funding available for English language training, ELT service priorities must be carefully set, asking at what point English language training stops being useful for those refugees for whom further English acquisition is likely to be very minimal.

English training and employment. There has been an on-going debate about whether resettlement programs should focus early efforts exclusively on employment rather than ELT. The data suggest not. Most recently arrived refugees who have participated in English language training receive the training during their first year after arrival. The results of this study indicate that participation in English language training may foster more English acquisition than employment does, at

least in the initial months of resettlement. These findings suggest that some initial language training may be more conducive to English acquisition than immediate placement in employment.

Program funding. Fluctuations in funding levels and cycles have made it difficult for local service providers to establish and operate stable and effective English language programs. This instability is consistently identified as the major problem facing program planners. On-going institutional relationships between funding agencies and service providers should be promoted to provide a more stable basis for planning and delivering English language training to refugees.

Local Program Planning

The findings of this project suggest that design and organization of programs at the local level affects refugees' participation in programs, their classroom behavior, and probably service outcomes.

Overcoming barriers to participation. Though participation in refugee English language training programs is high, barriers still exist which prevent some refugees in need of training from attending programs. Creative ways of removing barriers to participation have been successfully implemented by numerous programs throughout the country. These alternatives should be considered by programs with similar problems.

For example, lack of literacy skills may be a barrier to participation for some students, since even the lowest level classes available in some of the locales may implicitly assume literacy skills. Many programs with substantial numbers of nonliterate students have recognized the need for specialized training geared toward nonliterates and have provided special classes for this group. In one area highly

impacted by nonliterate groups, students with limited literacy skills attend a bilingual preparatory program which orients them to basic literacy skills and classroom skills before they attend other English language training programs.

Lack of child care is a common barrier to participation that has been more difficult for programs to overcome since provision of child care is often seen as expensive and outside the English training budget. Some innovative solutions to this problem have included incorporating children into the educational setting in a women's program, coordinating child care services with local county social services agencies, bringing English classes to refugee housing projects, or sending volunteer teachers into refugee homes. Other programs have adjusted class schedules to allow family members to share child care at different times of the day. Programs have been able to reduce barriers to participation and improve their instructional design in part because of having the flexibility to adjust to changing student needs. Any guidelines or standards imposed at the state or federal level should continue to allow such flexibility at the program level.

Staffing. Staff qualifications should be a prime consideration in planning and implementing local English language training programs. Analyses of local questionnaires, interviews, and on-site observations suggest that a positive step toward enhancing refugee English language training would be to emphasize the use of qualified, full-time teachers wherever possible. Qualified means not only experienced and trained in teaching English to non-native speakers, but also having experience with and sensitivity toward peoples of different cultures. There are clear budgetary and personnel-policy constraints on building a core of

full-time teachers, and additional resources and funding stability may be needed before such staffing patterns can be established.

On-going staff training and development, already implemented in many programs, is necessary to keep up with the changing needs of new arrivals: New groups will vary in their background characteristics, cultures and previous English language training. Effective training programs will need to adjust to these changes as well as remain informed about the growing body of materials and instructional techniques which have been developed for similar populations in recent years.

Structure of classes. The project findings imply that programs have difficult choices to make if they are to maximize available resources and maintain quality instruction. For example, whereas some data point to the benefits of the greatest possible differentiation of classes by proficiency level and student goals, and the smallest class size possible, other findings suggest that using full-time teachers may be most beneficial to program consistency and continuity as well as to attracting and keeping qualified professionals in refugee English language training instruction. Given limited resources, programs might increase differentiation by proficiency level instead of having more parallel sections of the same level. At higher levels of instruction, for example, we have seen how written materials are much more commonly used than at lower levels, which depend more on spoken instruction. At the lower levels, where spoken interaction is the most accessible medium for students having little education or literacy skills, smaller classes may be most important; at higher levels, though smaller classes might still be optimum, students can use written materials as learning tools, depending less on individual instruction from the teacher.

The importance of education and literacy as predictors of success in English acquisition, as well as the finding that much of English language training instruction uses literacy as an important means of instruction, suggests that prior literacy of students be considered carefully in placement. The project found no evidence suggesting that placing nonliterate students with literate students was not successful, but programs and teachers should be aware of the special difficulties nonliterate students may face in English language training classrooms.

Program Development of Curricula, Assessment and Instructional Materials

A good deal of experimentation, development and innovation has occurred in local programs. However, these developmental activities too often have taken place in isolation: Appropriate materials, assessment procedures and staff training activities are designed over and over again independently in individual classrooms and programs. A wealth of potentially useful ideas and materials exists in local English language training programs, but much of it is inaccessible to those who need it most. For example, secondary migration has meant that many refugee students have left areas which had developed specialized programs for them, only to move to another part of the country where the English language training programs they now attend are not so well equipped to train them. Since the programs most in need of this updated information appear to be those most isolated from these sharing networks, they might consider initiating membership in professional English language training organizations at the state and national level. Most of these organizations now include refugee and adult ESL groups among their special interest groups. Some programs have developed curricula or

materials which could help new programs or programs in areas recently impacted by secondary migrants. Such developers should be encouraged to share their research and materials, not only through professional associations and informal networks, but through formal channels which exist for the purpose of dissemination, such as the Refugee Materials Center, U. S. Department of Education, Kansas City, Missouri, or the ERIC educational data base. Project data indicate that where such technical assistance has been available, such as in the past from the Center for Applied Linguistics, programs have received substantial assistance from them.

Teaching Implications

A wide range of teaching approaches, techniques and materials are in use in refugee English language training. In most programs, instructors are given considerable discretion in how they teach their classes, and appear to adjust teaching to the proficiency levels of the students. Differences in student backgrounds and goals suggest that there is no one "right" way to teach refugees English. Some teachers have found success using innovative approaches, others find that students are most comfortable with approaches traditional to Southeast Asia. Whatever type of classroom instruction is chosen, the findings of this study suggest that teachers should consider the cultural and educational backgrounds of their students carefully and choose approaches accordingly. In particular, teachers should carefully assess how they use literacy in the classroom, and whether the use of reading and writing is appropriate for all the students. Though nonliterate Southeast Asian students indicate they value a highly structured environment using some type of book,

instructors should carefully weigh the appropriateness of given texts for beginning level students. Almost unanimously, teachers experienced with nonliterate learners suggest that oral skills and comprehension are most effectively taught using concrete objects and activities.

Evidence collected in this project indicates that certain types of activities and approaches tend to encourage students to speak English in class. If a goal of a particular classroom is to stimulate students to communicate in English, it appears that interactive activities are more effective than pattern practice or structured question and answer drills. Students use not only the teacher but also each other to practice and learn English. Especially in large classrooms, the students themselves may constitute a helpful resource for language practice.